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## House passes war bill, with conditions

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WASHINGTON — Hawai'i's two U.S. House members voted yesterday for a bill to provide \$50 billion in supplemental funds for the Iraq war but only because it calls for troop withdrawal to begin within a month.

The bill only provides a quarter of the \$196.4 billion that President Bush has requested for the war for this year and sets a goal that most troops must be withdrawn from Iraq by Dec. 15, 2008.

"We have listened to the American people and know that, now more than ever, they want this war to end," said Rep. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawai'i. "This legislation accomplishes what the public has demanded and what is right for our troops and our nation."

Hirono and Democratic Rep. Neil Abercrombie have consistently supported pulling troops out of Iraq.

"We passed this bill because we have an obligation to exercise our judgment and do what we know is right," Abercrombie said. "I hope the Senate will be able to find its way through the maze of its own rules and procedures and do the same."

The bill, which includes money for the war in Afghanistan, passed the House on a 218-203 vote but faces an uncertain future in a narrowly divided Senate where 60 votes would be needed for approval. The White House also has promised a veto.

"I always have expectations to get 60 votes, but we've never been able to do it," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said Tuesday.

Reid also said that if the bill passes and Bush doesn't accept it, "then the president won't get his \$50 billion."

But Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said he didn't expect the bill to get the needed 60 votes.

Despite the outlook, Reid wants the Senate to act on the bill before it leaves for the Thanksgiving recess.

Hirono also said Congress "needs to persist in our efforts" to wind down the Iraq war despite the president's veto threat.

"We understand that our fight to move in a new direction is not over," Hirono said.

In a statement yesterday, the White House Office of Management and Budget said Bush would veto the bill if it passed Congress.

"Instead of sending to the president, for purposes of political posturing, a bill they know will be vetoed, Congress should instead send him a clean funding bill," the statement said.

The House-passed bill would set up other policy requirements such as prohibiting torture and requiring troops to be fully trained and equipped before being sent to Iraq. But Bush is allowed to waive the requirements.

The bill also calls for a regional stability plan and its money would be used to pay for counterterrorism, force protection and Iraqi security forces training.

Military officials have warned of the need for the money, but Democrats, including Reid, said it would not be needed until next year and the military could transfer funds from other spending accounts.

"There has been a number of reports indicating that the military can do just fine until sometime in April, but we will see," Reid said.

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